

The Onion has won the bid for Infowars' assets



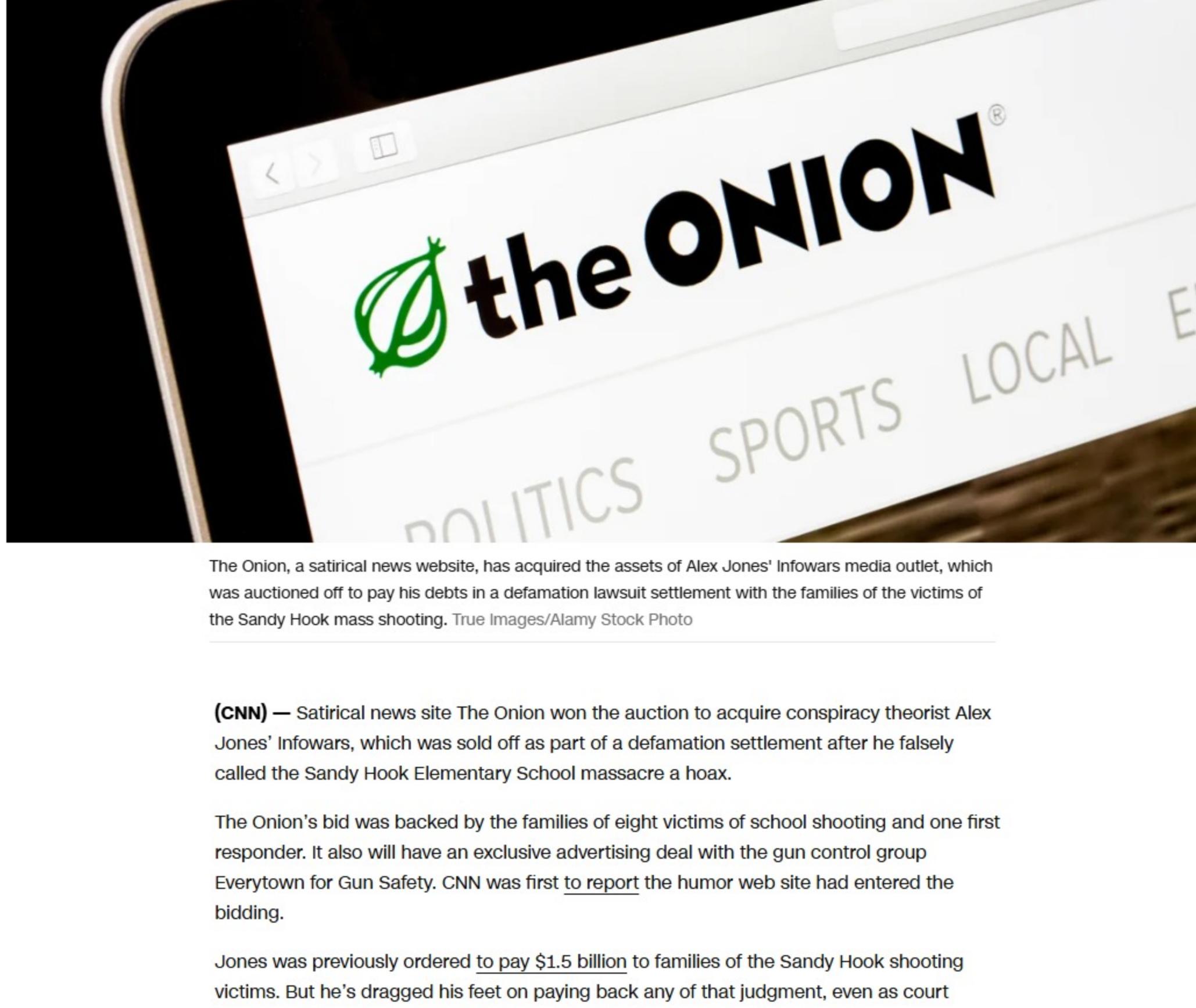
By Hadas Gold, CNN

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EXHIBIT

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The Onion, a satirical news website, has acquired the assets of Alex Jones' Infowars media outlet, which was auctioned off to pay his debts in a defamation lawsuit settlement with the families of the victims of the Sandy Hook mass shooting. True Images/Alamy Stock Photo

(CNN) — Satirical news site The Onion won the auction to acquire conspiracy theorist Alex Jones' Infowars, which was sold off as part of a defamation settlement after he falsely called the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre a hoax.

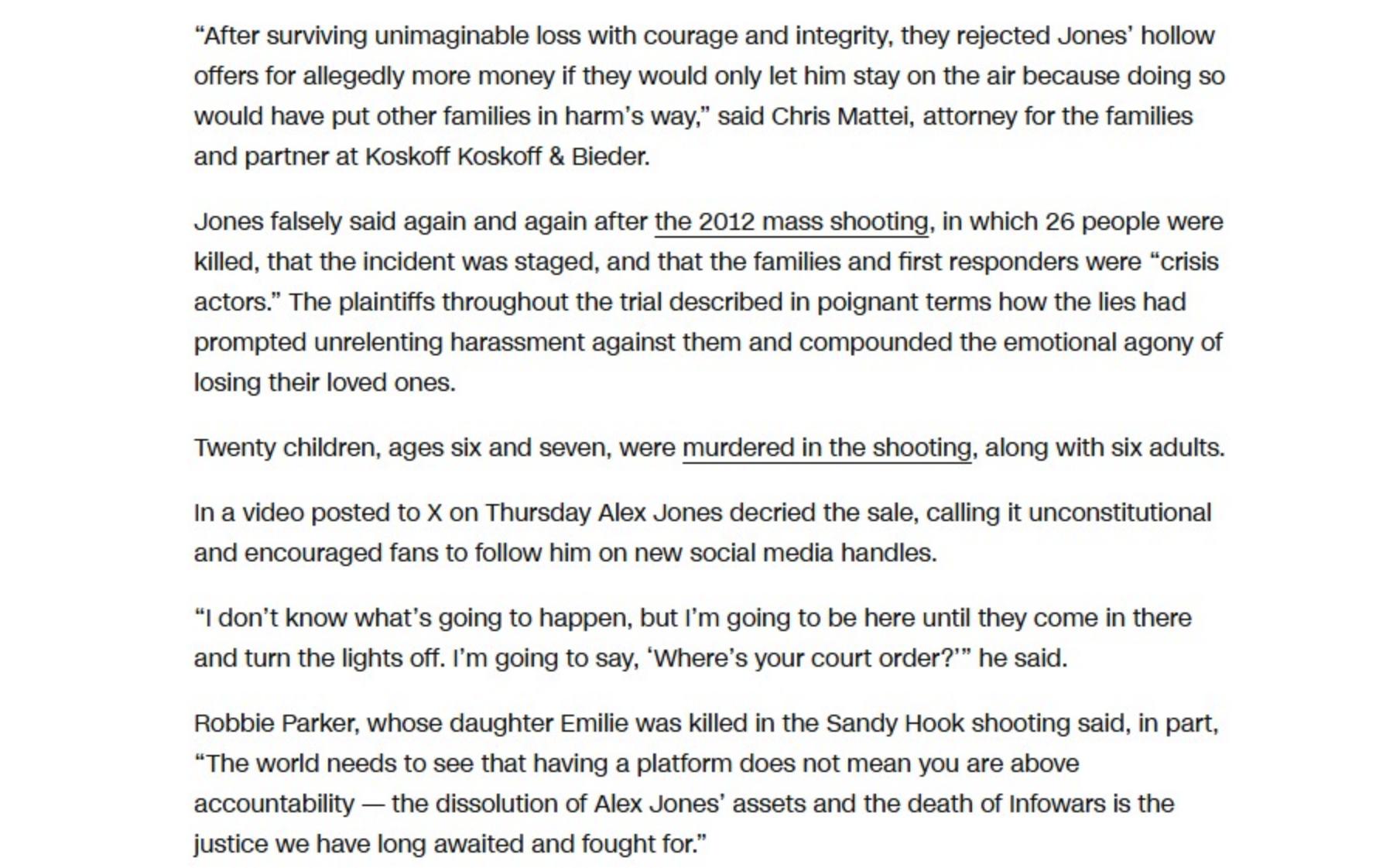
The Onion's bid was backed by the families of eight victims of school shooting and one first responder. It also will have an exclusive advertising deal with the gun control group Everytown for Gun Safety. CNN was first to report the humor web site had entered the bidding.

Jones was previously ordered to pay \$1.5 billion to families of the Sandy Hook shooting victims. But he's dragged his feet on paying back any of that judgment, even as court records show he continued spending tens of thousand of dollars a month.

Everything from the platform's studio equipment, online dietary supplement store, a Terradyne armored truck, its social media accounts and even a Winnebago motorhome was up for sale to the highest bidder. The amount of the bid was not announced.

Jones had used Infowars to spread some of the most disturbing and disgusting lies and conspiracy theories into the public discourse. And he enriched himself with millions of dollars in the process, profiting off a commerce engine he built off of the fear that he peddled on his platform.

"The Onion is proud to acquire Infowars, and we look forward to continuing its storied tradition of scaring the site's users with lies until they fork over their cold, hard cash," said The Onion CEO Ben Collins. "Or Bitcoin. We will also accept Bitcoin."



Alex Jones speaks to the media after arriving at the federal courthouse for a hearing in front of a bankruptcy Judge, Friday, June 14, 2024, in Houston. David J. Phillip/AP

In order to make the bid work, the families "agreed to forgo a portion of their recovery to increase the overall value of The Onion's bid, enabling its success," the families said in a statement.

"After surviving unimaginable loss with courage and integrity, they rejected Jones' hollow offers for allegedly more money if they would only let him stay on the air because doing so would have put other families in harm's way," said Chris Mattei, attorney for the families and partner at Koskoff Koskoff & Bieder.

Jones falsely said again and again after the 2012 mass shooting, in which 26 people were killed, that the incident was staged, and that the families and first responders were "crisis actors." The plaintiffs throughout the trial described in poignant terms how the lies had prompted unrelenting harassment against them and compounded the emotional agony of losing their loved ones.

Twenty children, ages six and seven, were murdered in the shooting, along with six adults.

In a video posted to X on Thursday Alex Jones decried the sale, calling it unconstitutional and encouraged fans to follow him on new social media handles.

"I don't know what's going to happen, but I'm going to be here until they come in there and turn the lights off. I'm going to say, 'Where's your court order?'" he said.

Robbie Parker, whose daughter Emilie was killed in the Sandy Hook shooting said, in part, "The world needs to see that having a platform does not mean you are above accountability — the dissolution of Alex Jones' assets and the death of Infowars is the justice we have long awaited and fought for."

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Everything at Infowars, from the microphones to the email lists, was up for auction to help pay off his settlement debts to the Sandy Hook families after being found guilty of defamation for calling the 2012 massacre a hoax.

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Jones' allies had also placed bids, with one source telling CNN that one of those bids was in the "seven figures" range. Jones had said on his show that "good guys" had been trying to bid on Infowars to keep it in place, but that even if they fail, he'll keep broadcasting on new platforms and new social media accounts.

The Onion plans to have the web site transition to its new content by January 2025, according to a joint release by Everytown for Gun Safety.

Oliver Darcy contributed reporting.

This story has been updated with additional developments and context.